1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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1995 REVIEW AND EXTENSION CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 18 April 1995, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. DHANAPALA (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. JUPPE (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union and Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Slovak Republic, said that, although the countries of Europe differed in their level of economic development, recent political history and choices with regard to the use of nuclear energy, they all held in common the values of democracy and freedom. They were also united by their common commitment to the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That commitment was based on the conviction that the proliferation of nuclear weapons was a threat to peace and international security, and that the NPT served the fundamental interests of the international community.

2. Concerning non-proliferation, the predictions made 20 years earlier that there would be 20 to 30 nuclear-weapon States by the end of the century had not materialized; in fact, South Africa's decision to renounce its weapons signalled an opposite trend. The draft treaty on the denuclearization of Africa had the support of all the European countries, who welcomed it as an undertaking for the peace and stability of that continent. Brazil, Argentina and Chile had given up their intention to acquire nuclear weapons, and Cuba's recent signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco should allow the conclusion of a legal instrument to prevent the emergence of nuclear weapons in the Latin American region. The discovery during the Gulf War of a secret nuclear programme in Iraq had led to a rethinking of the spirit in which International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards were carried out. They were currently based not only on trust among signatory countries, but also on improved capability to detect possible clandestine activities, which was indispensable for maintaining their credibility. As in the case of North Korea, the Agency must be able to verify effectively that States were complying with their obligations.

3. As the review would confirm, the Treaty made it possible for many countries to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, because of the confidence generated by compliance with its obligations. Export controls, far from being an obstacle to the development of trade in nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, were an essential component of the international system of non-proliferation.

4. During the 1990s, détente and peace had led to unprecedented disarmament accords between the two main adversaries of the cold war, and a return to the situation that had prevailed just ten years earlier was almost inconceivable. The arms race had ended: the nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia would be reduced by nearly two thirds, and the two European nuclear powers had begun unilateral arms reduction efforts.

5. For the first time in history, the international community had decided to begin negotiations on a complete nuclear test ban treaty that would be universal and verifiable. The European Union welcomed the forthcoming opening of

negotiations at the Disarmament Conference to draft a convention banning the production of fissile materials for explosive purposes. It also welcomed the efforts by the five nuclear-weapon States to respond to the expectations of the non-nuclear signatories of the NPT regarding security assurances. Security Council resolution 984 (1995) provided a collective, global and concrete response to that problem.

6. The European Union solemnly reaffirmed its commitment, in accordance with article VI of NPT, to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. The world was still going through a phase of change and instability, and the nature of the balances on which the next century would be founded was still unknown. Although there were an ever-growing number of accessions to the NPT, stronger international safeguards, more diversified means of verification and greater international solidarity, new regional ambitions were surfacing where the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction could be particularly dangerous. In order to reduce the risks of uncertainty and instability, increase confidence among States and strengthen the international legal status of the NPT, the Treaty must be made permanent. What united the parties to the NPT was more important than what divided them. The international community expected from the participants in the Conference the consolidation of the system of non-proliferation and confirmation of the disarmament process, and the indefinite extension of the Treaty was the only solution compatible with those objectives.

7. Mr. SPRING (Ireland) said that the international community was faced with the double task of removing any uncertainty about the future of the non-proliferation regime and ensuring that the regime was strengthened to respond to the changing circumstances and risks of the twenty-first century. Ireland's objectives for the Conference and other forums on nuclear disarmament were to see the complete abolition of nuclear weapons, to ensure that those who possessed nuclear weapons and technology did not pass it on to non-nuclear-weapon States, to end the testing of nuclear weapons everywhere, for all time, to end the production and stockpiling of materials for use in the manufacture of nuclear weapons, to strengthen further the detection, safeguard and verification systems, and to see the environmental, health and safety issues associated with the nuclear industry effectively addressed. Some argued that the only way to achieve those objectives was a series of short, conditional extensions of the Treaty, but in his view, any action that placed a question mark over the long-term future of the NPT would be a step backward.

8. Ireland had been very closely associated with the NPT from the days of its genesis in the United Nations General Assembly nearly 40 years earlier, and had been the first country to ratify the Treaty. The NPT was the most widely supported disarmament measure in history, and for the first time, all five declared nuclear-weapon States were participating in the Conference. Nuclear non-proliferation had become a global norm, and that achievement must be secured. For the Treaty to be fully effective, it should be universal, and the parties must continue to challenge those States holding out against membership to explain their reasons.

9. Like other non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty, Ireland had forgone, as a matter of principle, the option of developing nuclear weapons

capability. It believed that the only acceptable level of nuclear weapons was zero. Twenty-five years after entry into force of the Treaty, there was no justification for the existing stocks of nuclear weapons and fissile materials. The obvious first step in moving to zero nuclear weapons was to stop their development and to end nuclear testing. The achievement of a comprehensive test ban treaty would realize a major unfulfilled aspiration of the NPT. Pending the conclusion of such a treaty, the moratoria on nuclear testing introduced by the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom and France would continue. He called on China to introduce a similar ban.

10. The commitments undertaken by States to forgo, control and eliminate nuclear weapons would mean little if they were not accompanied by stringent verification arrangements. The serious challenges to the system of IAEA safeguards, notably in Iraq and North Korea, although rigorously addressed, none the less made it clear that confidence in the adequacy of the system must be strengthened. Some had asserted that the safeguards system must be based on trust, but it was, rather, an effective safeguards system that could create an atmosphere of confidence and trust. A more intrusive inspection system than the one currently existing would be a small price to pay for increased confidence and security.

11. An issue of particular concern to Ireland was the treatment of fissile material in the nuclear-weapon States. The Review Conference must emphasize the need for such material to be placed under IAEA safeguards and for non-nuclear-weapon States to avoid stockpiling plutonium in excess of normal operational requirements for peaceful nuclear programmes. Knowledge of the risks associated with the nuclear industry was far greater than it had been when the NPT had been negotiated: the Chernobyl disaster had opened a new era of awareness. The IAEA had a key function as the universal forum for the promotion of internationally acceptable safety levels in the nuclear industry. Of particular concern to Ireland was the environmental impact of the nuclear power installations across the Irish Sea at Sellafield.

12. The non-proliferation regime depended on the confidence of each State in the present and future behaviour of others. The international community could not yet be confident either of preventing the diversion of nuclear energy for peaceful uses to nuclear weapons programmes or of handling civilian nuclear materials safely, much less of managing the abundance of weapons-grade material in the world. Although the NPT could not itself generate adequate responses to these challenges, without credible guarantees that the Treaty would endure, the elements of the international non-proliferation regime would risk entering into decline. A series of short extensions would punctuate the future of the Treaty with question marks which would inevitably detract from its credibility.

13. It had been argued that those who were calling for the indefinite extension of the Treaty were tacitly consenting to the retention of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States. Yet, it was in the NPT alone that all five nuclear-weapon States had undertaken a legal obligation to pursue nuclear disarmament in good faith. The indefinite extension of the NPT was not incompatible with determined action on nuclear disarmament. It was a central part of the process of persuading those who possessed nuclear weapons to give them up and convincing others not to acquire them. The broad constituency of

States legally committed to non-proliferation and to nuclear disarmament through the NPT gave it its strength and held out a real hope for a world in which nuclear weapons no longer had a place.

14. An uncertain or weakened NPT, subject to the vagaries of negotiations at regular intervals or to progress in other forums, would seriously undermine confidence and put at risk all that had been achieved over the past 25 years. The message that should go out from the Conference was that the nuclear non-proliferation regime was permanent and that its contribution to the prevention of nuclear war remained vital not only to the current generation, but to succeeding generations as well.

15. Mr. EVANS (Australia) said that all nations - the nuclear-weapon States, the non-nuclear-weapon States, and even States which had not joined the NPT - had major interests at stake in its continued success. The growth in the Treaty's membership to its current level of 178 States reflected its success in preventing the horizontal spread of nuclear weapons. Australia itself had been seen as one of the countries with the capability and possible intention to develop nuclear weapons, but as a direct consequence of the NPT, had chosen not to pursue that option.

16. The threat of global nuclear war had clearly receded, but regional conflicts of the kind seen in recent years risked provoking wider tensions, and the possibility that they would engage the interests of States possessing nuclear weapons capability could not be ruled out. Cases of non-compliance with the non-proliferation regime itself, new concerns about nuclear smuggling, and the presence of facilities without safeguards in India, Pakistan and Israel were issues that must be faced. There were no grounds for complacency about the ability of the non-proliferation regime to continue to provide the current level of security.

17. The objectives of the Conference must be to establish non-proliferation irrevocably as the future standard for international behaviour, to continue and accelerate progress towards nuclear disarmament, to achieve universal membership in the Treaty, and to strengthen cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

18. The NPT was, with the United Nations Charter, fundamental to the maintenance of international security. Australia very strongly supported indefinite extension of the Treaty. A world which did not have a treaty regime in place for the containment of nuclear proliferation and the elimination of existing nuclear weapons was unthinkable. The NPT was the only treaty of global reach that bound its members to those objectives. A decision of indefinite extension, therefore, was the only possible position of principle to take for those resolutely committed to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Indefinite extension would also be most effective in pressing the declared nuclear-weapon States to continue the process of nuclear disarmament and in containing the nuclear aspirations of the so-called threshold States.

19. Indefinite extension of the Treaty offered the best encouragement for continuing the process of nuclear arms reduction which had finally begun. In Australia's view, to allow the decision on extension to be influenced by a

desire to punish one group of States or another for their past performance would be as misguided as it would be dangerous for the Member States' wider interests in the Treaty. The end of the cold war made progress in nuclear disarmament possible for the first time since the beginning of the nuclear age. The United States and Russia were each destroying about 2,000 weapons a year under the provisions of the START I and START II agreements, and the process had been extended to Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus under the Lisbon Protocol. All five nuclear-weapon States had come to support the negotiation of a convention to ban the production of fissile material for weapons purposes, and had also agreed on improved security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

20. The NPT had played a vital role in creating the conditions of confidence about non-proliferation which had allowed nuclear disarmament to proceed. A qualified decision to extend the Treaty could not possibly help the disarmament process. Indefinite extension of the NPT was the only way to reassure the nuclear-weapon States that further nuclear disarmament could be achieved without unacceptable security risks.

21. The argument that indefinite expansion would somehow legitimize the status of the nuclear-weapon States was quite unfounded; the NPT had been the single most important factor in establishing the international norm against nuclear weapons, and it remained the only international nuclear disarmament agreement which had been signed by all five nuclear-weapon States. It was therefore necessary to press ahead towards the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, and to continue and accelerate the process of deep reductions agreed between the United States and Russia; the three smaller nuclear-weapon States should join that process at the earliest appropriate opportunity. Australia also desired a permanent and comprehensive end to nuclear weapons testing through the rapid conclusion of negotiations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), one to which it intended to be an original signatory, and it also looked forward to the opening of negotiations on a convention banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes.

22. The existence of threshold or "twilight zone" States, remaining outside the Treaty and strongly suspected of possessing nuclear weapons capability, was sometimes used as a criticism of the Treaty. However, if such States were not prepared to join the 178 other States in forswearing nuclear weapons forever, they and not the Treaty were responsible. Indefinite extension of the Treaty was the only way to eventually convince such States to renounce nuclear weapons. Regional tensions and rivalries fuelled regional arms races that posed disturbing dangers for international security, but the NPT offered the assurance, through international inspection, that States were adhering to their undertakings not to acquire nuclear weapons. Only by indefinite renewal could the NPT continue to offer threshold States the security assurances they needed to break out of the cycle of nuclear escalation, or could the parties to the Treaty exert increased pressure on the threshold States to renounce nuclear weapons. South Africa's recent decision to join the NPT was influenced by the attraction of enhanced security and by the international pressures against possession of nuclear weapons brought to bear by a strong NPT, and thus illustrated the vital necessity of indefinite extension of the Treaty.

23. Indefinite extension was also vital for those wishing to engage in peaceful nuclear cooperation under the provisions of the NPT, as such cooperation required an assured environment of long-term security and stability. The significance of long-term non-proliferation assurances was magnified by the fact that planning, constructing and operating nuclear plants often required several decades, as well as heavy investments of financial and other resources. Indefinite extension would provide the basis for the long-term assurance essential to both suppliers and recipients of nuclear technology that their cooperation was for exclusively peaceful purposes and did not risk proliferation.

24. By ensuring that nuclear material, equipment and technology were provided to non-nuclear-weapon States only where subject to full-scope IAEA safeguards, export licensing or other export controls reinforced the Treaty's essential non-proliferation objective, and also helped to establish the environment of long-term assurance and stability necessary for effective cooperation. Moreover, such export controls could not be portrayed as a cartel or conspiracy exceeding the legitimate terms of the Treaty.

25. An aspect of those controls of particular interest to Australia was the central role of full-scope IAEA safeguards as a condition of nuclear supply to non-nuclear-weapon States, a principle which had become the accepted international standard for such transactions and had also been incorporated into the supply guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Australia hoped that members would endorse that principle by consensus in reviewing the operations of the Treaty.

26. The proliferation dangers which had led to the Treaty's creation 25 years previously had been held in check, but in the face of new challenges presented by technological advances and illicit transfers of nuclear material, the NPT and the norm of behaviour it entailed were more important than ever. The argument for indefinite extension of the Treaty could be summarized in a few words: Any decision to qualify or limit renewal of the Treaty could only weaken it, and an outcome that damaged the Treaty could not be risked. Only a decision to extend the Treaty indefinitely could guarantee that its objectives would be met and that the interests of all its members would be protected.

27. Mr. KOVÁCS (Hungary) said that for the previous 25 years, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had been an outstanding example of States' ability to find mutually acceptable solutions to even the most complex problems; in the case of the Treaty, the stake at risk continued to be the very survival of mankind. Over an arduous negotiation process, the States had arrived at the historic agreement that the proliferation of nuclear weapons must be prevented. Twenty-five years later, the States similarly agreed that they needed a durable and dependable Treaty that could serve as a basis for their security and for that of the entire world.

28. Hungary was convinced that the real interests of the States called for the indefinite extension of the Treaty, and fully shared the position expressed by the representative of the European Union. While it rejected the idea of linking the extension of the Treaty to certain achievements in other negotiations, it in no way wished to deny the necessity of conducting those negotiations with the

greatest resolve. Hungary wished to stress the urgent need to conclude further treaties on nuclear arms control and disarmament, and noted with satisfaction the strong commitment of the two Powers parties to START I and START II to implement those treaties and to explore further drastic cuts in their nuclear arsenals. It also wholeheartedly welcomed Security Council resolution 984 (1995), which it viewed as a major contribution towards providing additional security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. Such measures would constitute important contributions to fulfilling Member States' common obligations under article VI of the Treaty. In actuality, the indefinite extension of the NPT was a vital requirement for maintaining the conditions and atmosphere necessary to ensure progress in those negotiations.

29. Hungary commended the IAEA for providing non-proliferation assurances through its safeguards system, and called for universal application of those safeguards. It also encouraged all nuclear-weapon States to submit their peaceful nuclear installations to those safeguards under the voluntary offer agreements. It continued to support the Agency's efforts to improve and strengthen existing safeguards, and joined those who were calling for an improved IAEA safeguards system capable of providing credible assurances regarding not only declared nuclear activities but also the absence of undeclared nuclear activities.

30. Hungary had been a committed advocate of various efforts to further strengthen elements of the non-proliferation regime. The principle of full-scope safeguards as a condition of supply for any significant new nuclear export had been incorporated into its export licensing regulations and practice. The implementation and continuous updating of the agreed common policy of supplier States facilitated cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by enhancing confidence that nuclear exports would not contribute to unsafeguarded fuel cycles or any weapons-related activities.

31. The new phenomenon of the illicit transfer and smuggling of nuclear materials posed challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime; in order to eliminate that threat, an increased physical protection system of nuclear materials needed to be introduced in all countries, along with a higher level of international cooperation.

32. In Hungary, nuclear power generation provided about one half of total electricity production, and advanced nuclear-related scientific activities had been developed. A significant part of Hungary's achievements in the nuclear field had been accomplished through international cooperation. The Treaty had greatly promoted bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Hungary remained committed to the broadest cooperation in that respect with all those countries that respected the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation.

33. As Chairman-in-Office for 1995 of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, he wished to draw attention to document NPT/CONF.1995/13 containing an excerpt from the Budapest Summit Declaration adopted in December 1994 by the Heads of State and Government of the States participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. It reflected the strong belief of those 52 States that the proliferation of nuclear and other

weapons of mass destruction, and missiles to deliver them, posed a threat to international peace, security and stability and that the non-proliferation Treaty should be indefinitely and unconditionally extended.

34. Mr. KINKEL (Germany) said that the Conference was not a routine diplomatic event; the decision to be taken was of crucial importance for peace and security in the twenty-first century. At stake was the future of mankind. The threat arising from the most dangerous of all weapons of mass destruction must be averted. Although the nuclear genie could not be forced back into the bottle, everything must be done to tame it. Many strategies to that end had failed. The non-proliferation Treaty was a realistic and successful response to the nuclear challenge, based on the recognition that a continually increasing number of nuclear-weapon States was bound to lead to incalculable risks for the survival of mankind.

35. At a time of mistrust between East and West and disagreement between North and South, the Treaty had been the first evidence of a new global thinking. Forced upon the signatory States by a common survival instinct, a historic compromise had been founded which took account of their common interests. In spite of its deficiencies, the Treaty had lived up to all expectations over the past 25 years. Dangerous developments in the direction of the proliferation of nuclear weapons had been halted or reversed. The number of signatory States had risen to 178. All the successor States of the Soviet Union had acceded. Africa had become a nuclear-weapon-free zone. If the Treaty was extended indefinitely, it would be easier to persuade the other countries to join. The Treaty was the guarantor of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the control of IAEA; IAEA was making a valuable contribution through its technical assistance programmes. Now that the confrontation between East and West was over, the Treaty was needed more than ever. In a multipolar world full of nuclear players, there could no longer be a balance of terror, only an omnipresent threat. Nuclear proliferation was no longer a danger for States alone: nuclear civil wars and atomic weapons in the hands of terrorists had become conceivable.

36. Germany had long ago renounced all types of weapons of mass destruction, and had proved that renunciation of nuclear weapons was in no way a disadvantage. That decision was wholeheartedly supported by all democratic parties in the German Bundestag. Germany was fully committed to all the obligations arising from the Treaty. It appreciated the concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States and would continue to urge further energetic steps towards disarmament. However, it rejected the idea of making the Treaty's extension conditional, since that would only play into the hands of those who sought a pretext to justify their own nuclear ambitions. For Germany, the durability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime had absolute priority over all other considerations. More States were committed to the Treaty than to any other international agreement except the Charter. There was now an unprecedented opportunity to make the ban on the proliferation of nuclear weapons a universal norm of international law, provided that agreement was reached on an indefinite, unconditional extension of the Treaty. The United Nations was needed as the guardian of non-proliferation. The Security Council should play an active role in that respect.

37. In recent years, the nuclear disarmament obligation in article VI had been fulfilled to an extent no one could have imagined. That process must be vigorously continued; the five nuclear Powers must fulfil that obligation since it had been the very reason for the accession to the Treaty of the great majority of the community of nations.

38. In order to make the nuclear disarmament process irreversible, no more fissionable material must be produced for weapons purposes, and weapons-grade fissionable material from dismantled weaponry must not be used to build new weapons and must not fall into the hands of nuclear smugglers. Hundreds of tonnes of spare plutonium must be reliably monitored. Germany reiterated its proposal for an international plutonium regime.

39. There was an urgent need for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. If the 1995 deadline could not be met, it must be signed in 1996.

40. The expansion of the Conference on Disarmament was long overdue. The article VI obligation applied to all signatory States, whether they were nuclear-weapon States or not. Therefore, the sole multilateral negotiating forum for global disarmament and arms control should be open to all those who wished to participate.

41. In the light of events in Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the instruments available to IAEA must be further strengthened. The right to conduct special inspections in non-declared sites must be exercised and enforced.

42. Germany welcomed the merging and harmonization of the declarations by the nuclear-weapon States on security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States. Security Council resolution 984 (1995) was an important step in that direction.

43. Everyone knew that the real problems facing mankind on the threshold of the twenty-first century, including mass migration and terrorism, environmental disasters, poverty and overpopulation, could not be solved through the possession of nuclear weapons. However, stopping proliferation for all time and a permanent disarmament pledge by the nuclear-weapon States were major preconditions for solving those problems.

44. Germany therefore called for the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty.

45. Mrs. AGNELLI (Italy) paid tribute to the two French peacekeepers who had lost their lives in Sarajevo over the past weekend.

46. The substantial achievements of the non-proliferation Treaty were clear: the proliferation of nuclear weapons had been effectively contained, and the security of all States dramatically enhanced. Her delegation fully endorsed the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France on behalf of the European Union and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Italy firmly believed that the Treaty must acquire a permanent character, thereby further contributing to peace and stability in the world.

47. Italy had ratified the Treaty after an extensive and difficult internal debate, during which serious concerns had been raised. During the negotiations on the Treaty, Italy had strongly promoted the arrangements for periodic reviews of its implementation and had been in favour of limiting its validity to an initial 25-year period. In the midst of the cold war, the East-West confrontation had posed a threat to its security and to its very survival. Italy's decision to forgo the nuclear option had been a gesture of responsibility and trust in international agreements and obligations. At that time the arms race, particularly in the nuclear field, had been in full acceleration. The renunciation of nuclear weapons had been particularly significant for countries like Italy that were politically and geographically most exposed to the East-West confrontation and that had the technological and industrial capability to become nuclear powers.

48. The international situation had profoundly changed. The danger to mankind was no longer the nuclear arms race - "vertical" proliferation - but "horizontal" proliferation, including the possibility of terrorist organizations arming themselves with weapons of mass destruction.

49. The process of negotiating nuclear disarmament in accordance with the commitments of article VI of the Treaty was well under way. Nuclear disarmament, starting with the two major nuclear Powers, had become irreversible. It would be a mistake to ignore the new realities and respond to the problem of nuclear proliferation with the logic of the cold war. Although some countries continued to feel that the Treaty perpetuated differences in status, Italy felt that that view was out of step with the times, when the role of the United Nations as an instrument to maintain peace and security was being strengthened. Italy appealed to those countries which still had doubts about the wisdom of indefinitely extending the Treaty to recognize the new political and security realities and draw the appropriate conclusions, bearing in mind the global interests of the international community.

50. Italy understood the concerns expressed about the slow pace in the negotiation or implementation of important agreements in the field of nuclear disarmament. However, it must be recognized that significant results had been achieved, even if they were not yet conclusive. A comprehensive test-ban treaty was likely to be concluded shortly. In the meantime, a moratorium on nuclear testing had already been decided on and implemented by most nuclear-weapon States. Negotiations on prohibiting the production of fissile material for military purposes were expected to begin soon. Italy, as a member of the Security Council, was promoting a global system of adequate security assurances by nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty which effectively complied with their obligations. Security Council resolution 984 (1995) testified to major progress in that direction.

51. Italy recognized the importance of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and understood the legitimate expectations of those countries that wished to acquire nuclear capability for the purpose. As a member of the European Union, it was contributing to several assistance projects, especially in the area of nuclear safety, involving the transfer of technology for economic development. Strict safeguards were needed to prevent possible diversions of nuclear material for

military purposes. Safeguards should also be applied to nuclear installations, especially those of an older generation, to ensure that a satisfactory level of safety was maintained.

52. In Europe, the Treaty had become an integral part of the political and strategic environment and was ensuring stability. The decision made by the Heads of State and Government of the 15 countries of the European Union to undertake common action to promote the indefinite extension of the Treaty was clear evidence of their commitment to non-proliferation.

53. As a Mediterranean country, Italy welcomed the recent accession of Algeria to the Treaty and was following with interest the progress already made towards making the African continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone. South Africa's decision to renounce the nuclear option confirmed that the possession of nuclear weapons was reversible, and was a highly significant precedent. Italy attached great importance to the efforts under way to establish an area free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The principle of universality which inspired the Treaty obviously applied to that area too. Italy appealed to all countries in the Middle East to accept the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

54. Italy was convinced that the indefinite extension of the Treaty, far from being an obstacle to the ongoing and future negotiations on disarmament, would facilitate their success. The development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy would also greatly benefit. The work programmes of the relevant international forums, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, confirmed that the process of arms reduction, particularly of nuclear weapons, was irreversible. Moreover, there would be no impediment to the supply of equipment and technology to countries with a genuine interest in using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only.

55. Mr. DURÃO BARROSO (Portugal) said that in recent years the international community had shown a common interest in the search for a solution to the continuing spread of weapons of mass destruction. The end of the cold war had brought the revival of some ancient questions which had in the past led to world-wide suffering and destruction. There was an escalation of ethnic intolerance, and growing nationalism and regional conflicts, sometimes involving a relentless quest for the possession of weapons of mass destruction. The proliferation of such weapons was one of the greatest dangers to international peace and stability. The recognition of the need to halt their proliferation was evidenced by the increasing number of adherents to the Treaty.

56. The Treaty was unique; it was the pillar of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential guarantor of the development of international cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Portugal believed that further improvements in the international non-proliferation regime could be achieved. IAEA had done much to ensure the compliance of States parties with the Treaty's provisions, relying on the willingness of States to cooperate and fulfil the agreements signed. A renewed system of safeguards should enable IAEA to verify in an effective and transparent manner the enforcement of the obligations undertaken by the States parties through their full-scope safeguards agreements and the Treaty provisions. Portugal was firmly convinced of the need

to strengthen the existing safeguards system through the use of new technologies.

57. The Treaty had been the major political and legal barrier against the spread of nuclear weapons. It was the only global non-proliferation instrument and it had created an international norm that isolated States outside the regime which persisted in their efforts to develop or acquire nuclear weapons. At the same time it reflected the commitment of States parties to collective security because it was the only international agreement that obliged its parties to pursue measures for global disarmament.

58. Portugal fully supported the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty and endorsed the statement by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs in that respect. Without a durable non-proliferation Treaty, it was doubtful whether its achievements, as well as the current disarmament process and the consolidation of the non-proliferation regime, could be maintained. An indefinite extension would also provide a major reason for those States which insisted in staying out of the regime to join it or, at least, to adopt measures compatible with the existing non-proliferation norms; otherwise, they would risk becoming even more isolated. Any decision other than indefinite extension could undermine the whole non-proliferation system built upon the Treaty, thereby damaging its credibility and creating a feeling of instability within the international community.

59. The current international political momentum was favourable to that decision. Over the past few years there had been an unprecedented movement towards effective reduction of nuclear arsenals all over the world. The START treaties, along with the Lisbon Protocol and further unilateral decisions, would significantly reduce the number of nuclear weapons belonging to or in the control of the existing nuclear Powers.

60. Portugal also supported the ongoing negotiations of the Conference on Disarmament for a comprehensive test-ban treaty and looked forward to its early conclusion as well as the conclusion of a convention to prohibit the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes. It welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 984 (1995).

61. The indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty would better serve the interests of all States and thus preserve international peace and stability.

62. Mr. GURRIA (Mexico) said that the main problem in evaluating the application of the Treaty stemmed from the fact that it had been originally intended to perpetuate a situation that favoured nuclear-weapon States over non-nuclear-weapon States. That was why it had been deemed necessary to include certain conditions that the non-nuclear countries felt should be met in order to justify their decisions to abandon their rights to acquire nuclear weapons. However, as a result of changes in the international climate, especially the end of the cold war, the prospects for achieving progress in negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear testing were very bright. In that connection, his delegation was encouraged by the steps already taken by the Russian Federation and the United States under the START I and II Treaties.

63. Mexico had provided irrefutable proof of its commitment to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and wished to stress the need to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race. In that regard, nuclear-weapon States should firmly commit themselves to the elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth starting with the complete ban on nuclear testing. The Treaty of Tlatelolco, a legally binding instrument which banned the use of nuclear weapons or the threat of the use of such weapons in the Latin American and Caribbean region, should serve as an example to the whole world.

64. The international community should avoid polarization and make use of the unique opportunity offered by the Conference to achieve a consensus on the best means of consolidating the Treaty and ensuring its universal application in the twenty-first century. While his delegation understood the concern of those delegations which considered that limiting the effectiveness of the Treaty might endanger an instrument that continued to be the basis of the non-proliferation system, it nevertheless shared the opinion that States parties must continue to fight for nuclear disarmament. The extension of the Treaty was not an end in itself. Accordingly, any decision arising out of the Conference should consider several interrelated elements, namely: extending the Treaty with modalities emerging from a balance among all States parties; approving a treaty prohibiting nuclear testing within a year; starting negotiations on an agreement for the prohibition of fissile materials for military purposes as soon as possible; establishing binding negative security assurances for non-nuclear countries; strengthening the current safeguards regime of IAEA; and approving a reinforced review mechanism guaranteeing a periodic evaluation of the Treaty.

65. His delegation was prepared to participate in good faith in negotiations to find a suitable formula that enjoyed the support of the vast majority of the States parties and that took into account the universal concern about nuclear issues, not only the non-proliferation aspect thereof but also the need to make progress towards genuine and effective disarmament.

66. Mr. IKIMI (Nigeria) said that the considerable increase in the number of signatory States since the Fourth Review Conference reflected the desire of the majority of Member States for general and complete disarmament. As an early signatory, Nigeria had faithfully carried out its obligations under the Treaty; it had also concluded a Safeguards Agreement with IAEA. Nigeria's adherence to the Treaty stemmed from its conviction that enduring security could not be built on the possession of nuclear weapons. It therefore remained committed to the goal of nuclear disarmament. It continued to be active in all disarmament matters and collaborated with other countries in the effort to ensure a speedy negotiation of agreements that would strengthen the non-proliferation regime. As a result of their collective faith in the usefulness of the Treaty, many States had remained faithful to its provisions in spite of the inequities of the rights and obligations embedded therein.

67. The Treaty had been extremely successful in preventing the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons since there were only five acknowledged nuclear-weapon States. Other positive developments attributable to the Treaty were the growing number of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the imminent treaty on an African nuclear-weapon-free zone. Over the previous five years there had also been commendable developments in bilateral nuclear disarmament

between the Russian Federation and the United States, while South Africa, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine had given up their nuclear weapons. Those States had demonstrated that it was possible to do so without loss of status or diminished security.

68. However, his delegation was deeply concerned that, while the Treaty had succeeded in preventing the emergence of nuclear-weapon States, very little had been achieved in curbing the qualitative and quantitative improvement of nuclear weapons. Despite the intention of the Russian Federation and the United States to reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals under the Treaty on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II), they were yet to take concrete steps towards the elimination of nuclear weapons altogether. Indeed, when fully implemented, START II would still leave the two major nuclear-weapon States with more than enough warheads to wipe out human civilization. Nigeria was therefore calling for deeper cuts and urging the other nuclear-weapon States to undertake similar efforts. It also expected that all States parties would pursue the negotiations in good faith on measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and the elimination of nuclear weapons in accordance with their obligations under the Treaty.

69. Nigeria was worried about the extent of the commitments of the nuclear-weapon States parties not to transfer nuclear weapons or other explosive devices and related technology to other States and about selective compliance, which had enabled non-parties to acquire a nuclear-weapons capability. There was no doubt that such actions had led to the emergence of nuclear-threshold States and to the diversion of nuclear materials to weapons programmes. That situation could not but erode the confidence of many non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty and undermine its future viability.

70. Indeed, 25 years after the coming into force of the Treaty, none of the concrete disarmament measures envisaged therein had been accomplished and even the relative progress recorded at the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive test-ban treaty was tentative and not irreversible. In that connection, Security Council resolution 984 (1995) had fallen short of the desire of many non-nuclear-weapon States for a multilaterally negotiated and legally binding treaty prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. In that regard, the previous Review Conference had considered Nigeria's draft agreement on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty. It was designed to allay the anxieties of non-nuclear-weapon States over their vulnerability to nuclear intimidation as a result of their permanent military disadvantage.

71. The International Atomic Energy Agency must be assisted with adequate resources to perform its dual mandate. It was disappointing that despite faithful African adherence to the Treaty and the conclusion of safeguards agreements with IAEA, access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and enabling facilities had not been forthcoming. Although verification of compliance was a vital element in any disarmament agreement, the existing safeguards mechanism of NPT had proved to be inadequate for the monitoring of compliance with treaty obligations. The time had come for comprehensive and non-discriminatory verification provisions applicable to all States parties.

72. Glossing over the failures of the Treaty and extending it indefinitely would be an invitation to a nuclear disorder. The decision on extension must adequately address the concerns of all States parties and must meet the international security challenges of the present and future generations. Nigeria supported extension of the Treaty for a fixed period to be determined by the Conference with the proviso that it must not lapse at the end of that period. The spirit of give and take that had facilitated the conclusion of negotiations on the Treaty should equally prevail in the Conference deliberations in order to develop a programme of nuclear disarmament aimed at achieving a nuclear-free world in the twenty-first century.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.